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February 2013

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Njeze, Miracle Eka, "Use of Newspapers and Magazines in the Academic Pursuits of University Students: Case Study of Covenant University" (2013). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 845.
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Use of Newspapers and Magazines in the Academic Pursuits of University Students: Case Study of Covenant University

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined newspapers and magazines as essential sources of information for students in Covenant University. A survey method was adopted for this research, and the instrument used for data collection was observation, and a self developed questionnaire. A total of 250 copies of the questionnaires were administered to students, only 215 were retrieved and used for the analysis.

Findings revealed that the most consulted newspapers by both male and female students are the Punch, the Nation, Guardian, and Complete Sports, while the most consulted magazines by both students are PC World, Popular Science, Leadership and Time magazine, but female students have more interest in fashion magazines like Ebony, Style, Allure and Life etc.

From the analysis it was discovered that a larger percentage of male students consult more newspapers than their female counterpart while female students consult magazines more. Findings also shows that students in Covenant University do not place high priority on educational information rather more priority is placed on general information like sports, current affairs, politics & entertainment etc.

Introduction

Information has been described as key to economic and technological advancement to individuals and nations. Aina (2004) defined information as the process of informing and transmitting ideas from a source to a recipient, this information can be used interchangeably as news, facts, data and knowledge and can be accessed by users. Anaeto (2009) opined that newspaper is an unbound publication that provides varieties of information both in print and non print form and the content of the paper can be read repeatedly. Mc Mane (2001) observed that newspaper is an inexpensive way to enhance classwork by providing the basics for studying different subjects from basic literacy to the highest level of critical thinking. Magazines on the other hand are good sources of information; they are more colorful and made with quality papers but are restricted to selected topics to satisfy their readers. Manish (2011) observed that students are encouraged in extracurricular activities like games, athletics, arts & craft and various activities that make the memories of their stay in School interesting and worth remembering Newspapers and magazines provide information on current happenings around the world; they also provide information for research, entertainment and leisure. In academic pursuit, the availability and use of accurate and current information may determine success or failure. This paper is written to establish the effects of newspapers and magazines in an academic pursuit of students of Covenant University, Ota.

Covenant University

Covenant University is a mission university owned by the Living Faith Church World-wide. It was established in 2002 and is located in Ota, Ogun State. The University has two Colleges: College of Developmental Studies (CDS) which comprises three Schools Business studies, Social Studies, Human Development Studies and College of Science and Technology (CST) which comprises three Schools Natural Science, Environmental Sciences and Engineering. Covenant University has an ultra modern Library called Center for Learning Resources. The library is reported to be among the largest and the best in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

- To determine the most consulted newspaper/magazine by students of Covenant University.
- To determine the gender of most consulted newspapers/magazine.
- To determine the time spent in consulting newspapers and magazines.
- To determine the relevance of newspapers and magazines to their academic pursuit.
- To determine the challenges encountered by students while consulting newspapers/magazines.

Literature Review

Shanon (2003) and Dhanushka (2010) observed that newspaper must be timely, and well organized, they motivate, inspire, excite users and possess the capacity to retain information for many years. Anaeto (2009) and Waal (2005) and INEY (2008) opined that newspapers carry information on current events that are attractive to readers; its main function is informing, educating and entertaining the public, but some private newspapers contain articles that are not reliable and therefore not good or useful for the youth. IMNE (2011) and Pandey (2010) noted that newspapers have been the most conventional and popular medium for conveying local, regional, national and international news to the readers, they serve us with the latest happenings in different parts of the world through a network of correspondents and news agencies.

McMane (2001) and Babalola opined that newspaper gives an in-depth knowledge on a lot of issues; it is the most accessible and affordable written document because it encourages critical thinking, information retention, and problem solving. Malik (2009) observed that newspapers remove barriers by separating man from man by bring better understanding of people, their rights, duties as citizens and creates a platform to express their views. Curpen (2011) and Mundo (2006) observed that all professionals and non professionals need newspapers for rapid developments in their respective fields. Businessmen need newspapers to keep in touch with economic and commercial trends in the country and see current share prices while politicians need them to be abreast of recent political events in the country.

According to Onwubiko (2005) newspapers have been accorded a great deal of importance in the transmission of government policy, provision of regular source of current information for artisans, students & staff, while Waal (2005) observed that print newspapers is indeed better at expanding awareness of issues than their online counterparts for some groups in society; especially those with average or below average interest in news, whereas the online editions only seem to broaden the horizon of the highly educated in the society.

According to Ugah (2009) and Onu (2005) one of the fastest means of transmitting current information is through the print media especially the newspapers, most students read newspapers to broaden their knowledge and keep abreast of the recent developments, and to enhance their academic performance. Isaachson (2009) and Manish (2011) observed that newspaper have more readers than ever in terms of content especially among the youth of today. Martin (2003) noted that the demise of newspaper has long been predicted, yet they continue to survive globally despite competition from radio, television and the internet because they serve core social functions in successful cultures, however Veronis (2006) advised that newspapers, like network television, hold a major advantage over Internet sites because they still reach the large audiences that the Internet is having a hard time reaching, as the Internet is about fragmentation.

According to Farlex (2012), a magazine is a paperback periodic publication containing pictures, stories and articles of interest to readers. They are usually published monthly, quarterly or weekly. Mundo (2006) and Anaeto (2009)

opined that magazines are readily available for everyone from kids to executives; hence the ability to reach specific audience. Dir Next (2010) noted that magazines are channels of communication halfway between newspapers and books due to the changing lifestyle in the world, but Praathek (2004) observed that today only few people create time to read a book with full concentration, they rather peruse the magazine to find something of interest, and then settle down to read. Chakraborty (2009) observed that magazines help students write and express their ideas in a corporate way by assisting them in public speaking.

Preservation of Newspapers and Magazines

Brown (2010) opined that old newspaper articles serve as a great source of information for research purposes for staff and students, for certain business requirements & even for specific requirements of different professionals.

Most Academic Libraries in Nigeria are encouraged to have a functional library which takes care of all preservation needs and must be headed by a Librarian who should digitize both newspapers and magazines daily to prevent backlog. Any backlog of newspaper and magazines should be microfilmed and accessed with the aid of a microfilm reader and newspapers that have spent over 10years should be disposed. Fabunmi (2009) opined that there are three major reasons for digitization:

- The need to preserve endangered library resources.
- Improvement of the efficiency of information search mechanisms.
- Digitization improves access to library resources.
- Most libraries digitize materials which may be lost in the future, such as old manuscripts, journals, research projects, newspapers and magazines etc.

Research Methodology

A survey method was adopted for this study. The instrument used to collect data was observation and the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to know the rate of consultation, the relevance of information sought, the gender of most consulted materials, the most consulted newspapers and magazines by students, the time spent in consulting the materials and the challenges students encountered in consulting the materials.

A stratified random sampling method was adopted based on the Colleges of Students; the Course representative for each School administered the questionnaires in class, while the library staff at the newspaper desk administered the questionnaire to students who were mistakenly omitted. Completed questionnaires were retrieved from students immediately after completion. A total of 250 copies of the questionnaires were administered to students, but 215 (86%) were retrieved and used for the analysis. There was a high rate of retrieval because the questionnaires were collected immediately after completion.

Table 1a: most consulted newspapers

S/N	Newspapers	Males		Females		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Complete Sports	16	13.8	14	14.1	30	14.0
2	Punch	20	17.2	15	15.1	35	16.3
3	The Nation	14	12	12	12.1	26	12.1
4	Nigerian Compass	12	10	08	8.1	20	9.3
5	Guardian	10	8.6	12	12.1	22	10.2
6	Tribune	04	3.4	06	6.1	10	4.7
7	Vanguard	08	6.9	10	10.1	18	8.4
8	Daily independent	03	2.6	01	1.0	04	1.9
9	National Mirror	07	6.0	04	4.0	11	5.1
10	Business Day	10	8.6	08	8.1	18	8.4
11	Daily Sun	09	7.8	07	7.1	16	7.4
12	Daily Champion	03	2.6	02	2.0	05	2.3
		116		99		215	

The result shows that Punch, Complete Sports, The Nation and Guardian newspapers are the mostly consulted papers by both male and female students in Covenant University.

Table 1b represents most consulted magazine.

Table 1b: represents most consulted magazine.

S/N	Magazines	Males		Females		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Popular Science	08	7.8	09	8.0	17	7.9
2	Newswatch	05	4.9	06	5.3	11	5.1
3	Tell	07	6.8	04	3.5	11	5.1
4	Leadership	08	7.8	07	6.2	15	7.0
5	Ebony	06	5.9	09	8.0	15	7.0
6	Newsweek	05	4.9	04	3.5	09	4.1
7	The News	07	6.8	06	5.3	13	6.0
8	Time	06	5.9	08	7.1	14	6.5
9	Readers Digest	07	6.9	08	7.1	15	7.0
10	African Report	04	3.9	03	2.7	07	3.3
11	PC World	09	8.8	09	8.0	18	8.4
12	Focus on Africa	05	4.9	02	1.8	07	3.3
13	Economist	07	6.9	08	7.1	15	7.0
14	Style	05	4.9	08	7.1	13	6.0
15	Allure	07	6.9	09	8.0	16	7.4
16	Life	06	5.9	09	8.0	15	7.0
		102		113		215	

The table shows that the most consulted magazines by both male and female students are PC World, Popular Science, Leadership and Time magazine. This shows that students in Covenant University are ICT driven and they want to be abreast with recent happenings in other Countries. It is also observed that female students have a flare for fashion, as a result the increase in consultation of fashion magazines like Ebony, Style, Allure and Life respectively.

Table 2 represents gender that consults newspapers and magazines regularly.

Table 2: represents gender that consults newspapers and magazine the most.

Gender	Newspapers		Magazines	
	N	Percentage %	N	Percentage %
Male	116	54.0	106	49.3
Female	99	46.0	109	50.7
Total	215	100	215	100

Table 2 shows that the demand for newspaper is high, about 54% of male students consult more newspapers than the female students (46%) however; the reverse is the case with magazines because female students consult more magazines (50.7%) than their male counterpart 49.3%.

Table 3 shows the time spent in consulting newspapers and magazines.

Table 3: represents the time spent in consulting newspapers and magazines.

Rate of Consultation	Students	
	N	Frequency %
Less than an hour	72	33.5
Greater than an hour	92	42.8
3 hours and above	51	23.7
Total	215	100

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The result from the above table shows that about 33.5% of the students under study spend less than an hour reading newspaper and magazine, 42.8% spend over an hour, while 23.7% of the students spend 3 hours and above reading newspaper and magazine. This implies that most students use their lecture period reading newspapers and magazines.

Table 4 represents the relevance of information consulted in newspapers and magazines by students.

Table 4: represents the relevance of information consulted in newspapers and magazines by students.

Information needs	Students	
	N	%
Educational information	63	29.3
General information	152	70.7
Total	215	100

Table 4 shows that students place high priority about 70.7% on general information like Entertainment, Sports, Politics, World News, Current Affairs, Business, and latest Fashion Trends because they want to abreast with current happenings in their environment and less priority 29.3% on Educational information such as Assignment, Academic work and Research.

Table 5 represents the challenges encountered while consulting newspapers and magazines

Table 5: represents the challenges encountered while consulting newspapers and magazines

Patronage	Newspapers	N	%	Magazines	N	%
Sometimes	Availability between 9am-2pm daily	85	39	Availability between 9am-2pm daily	108	50.2
Always	Availability between 3pm-9pm daily	130	61	Availability between 3pm-9pm daily	107	49.8
Total		215	100		215	100

Table 5 shows that few newspapers about 39% are always available in the mornings, between 9am-2pm for students' use, while 61% of newspapers are available in the afternoons. Magazines are always available irrespective of time needed for consultation, but there is greater demand for newspapers than magazines.

Conclusions

Newspapers and magazines are essential sources of information for students in Covenant University. It is observed that the most consulted newspapers by both male and female students are Punch, the Nation, and Guardian. Findings reveal that a greater percentage of male students consult complete sports, but female students consult Popular Science & Fashion magazines more than male students who are more interested in PC World and Leadership magazines. It is pertinent to create a balance in the consultation of both newspapers and magazines by male and female students in Covenant University.

Findings also revealed that students consult resources more on general information such as Sports, Current Affairs & Politics etc, and less on educational information which relates to their discipline. In as much as general information is excellent, it enhances students reading and writing skills, increases their knowledge base and makes them more robust in their academics. It is imperative to know that from the result above, most students spend more of their useful time daily consulting newspaper and magazine instead of investing their time in more creative stuff that would benefit them academically, therefore students are encouraged to create a balance for effective time management.

Result from findings reveals that newspapers and magazines are always supplied daily by the university though newspapers are accessible by students much later in the day which is one of the challenges encountered, but magazines can be accessed anytime of the day. It is not advisable for students to consult newspapers and magazines early in the day, at the expense of attending classes, unless for specific assignments.

Recommendations

The library staff at the newspaper desk must be smart, intelligent, courteous and endeavor to be on his duty post constantly to attend to users' needs. He must ensure that newspapers and magazine with high demand from students are always available for consultation, and daily statistics taken by ensuring that the particulars of the material is well documented by writing students names, the title of material consulted, department, matriculation number, level of study, time in and time out. Both male and female students consult Punch, the Nation and Guardian newspaper more because they want current, accurate and genuine information while in complete sports male students want to have an update on latest happenings in sports. Magazines like PC World, Leadership, Popular Science, and Time are in high demand amongst Covenant University students because of the exposure to ICT and the need to possess leadership skills.

Female students prefer consulting magazines than newspapers because magazine appeal more to them because they can be subscribed to at will, are attractive, have a longer life span, covers a wide range of topics, like family life, relationships, business, fashion and prices of commodities, while newspapers appeal more to male students because it gives current information on general issues, like business, politics, job opportunities and entertainment. The Library should include the kind of information sought for, using newspapers and magazines in the Universities Curriculum during trainings on the use of library; this will help create a balance in student's information seeking skills.

Students are admonished to invest more time on educative information than on general information for positive impact in their academic performance because not all information from newspapers and magazines articles is reliable and therefore not good or useful for the students.

The Vendor must ensure that newspapers and magazines are supplied early enough, so that the librarian in charge of indexing the materials must hasten up his work in order to make the newspapers available to students as at when needed, else it will be opposing Ranganathan's law, which says we must "save the time of the reader."

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